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DARK AGES

WEISMAN
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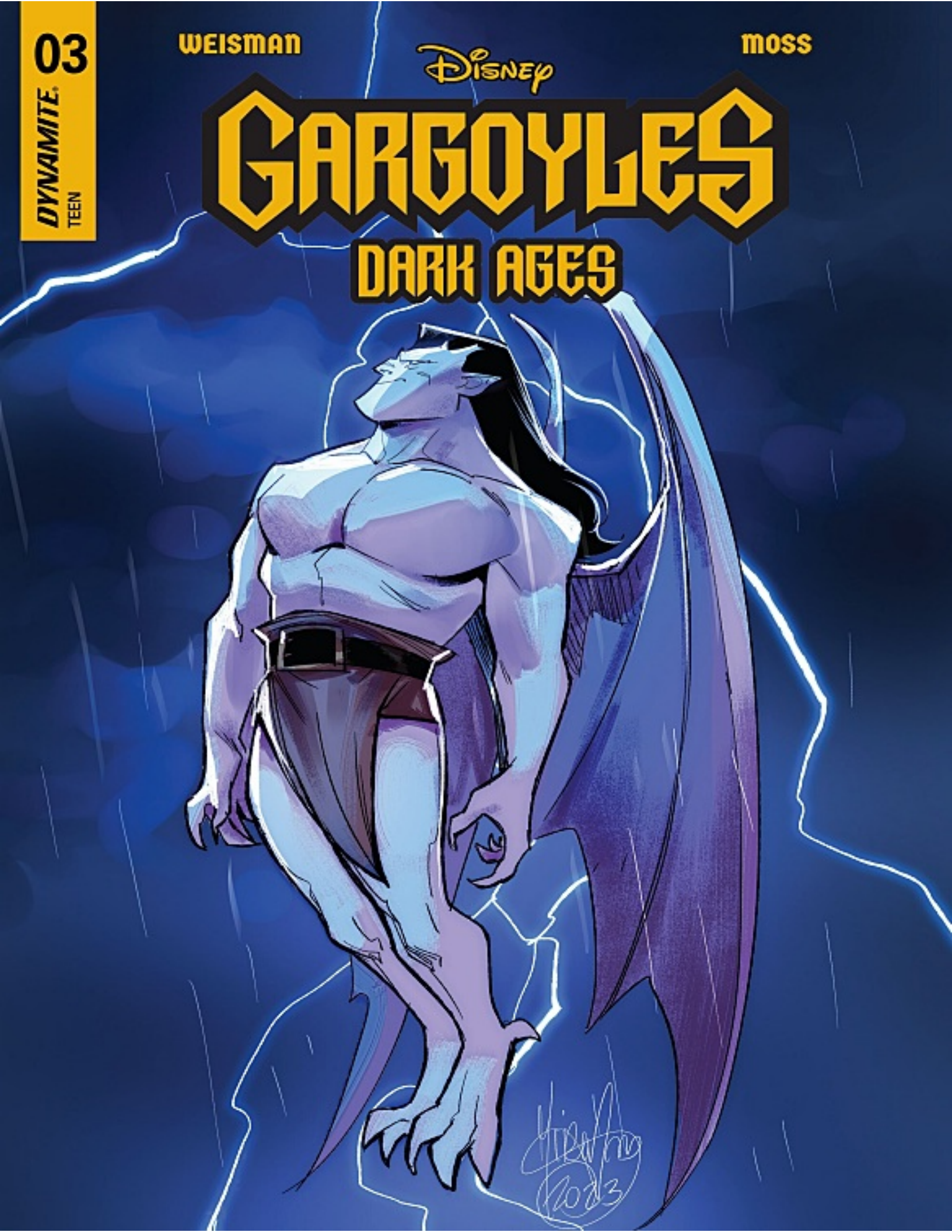
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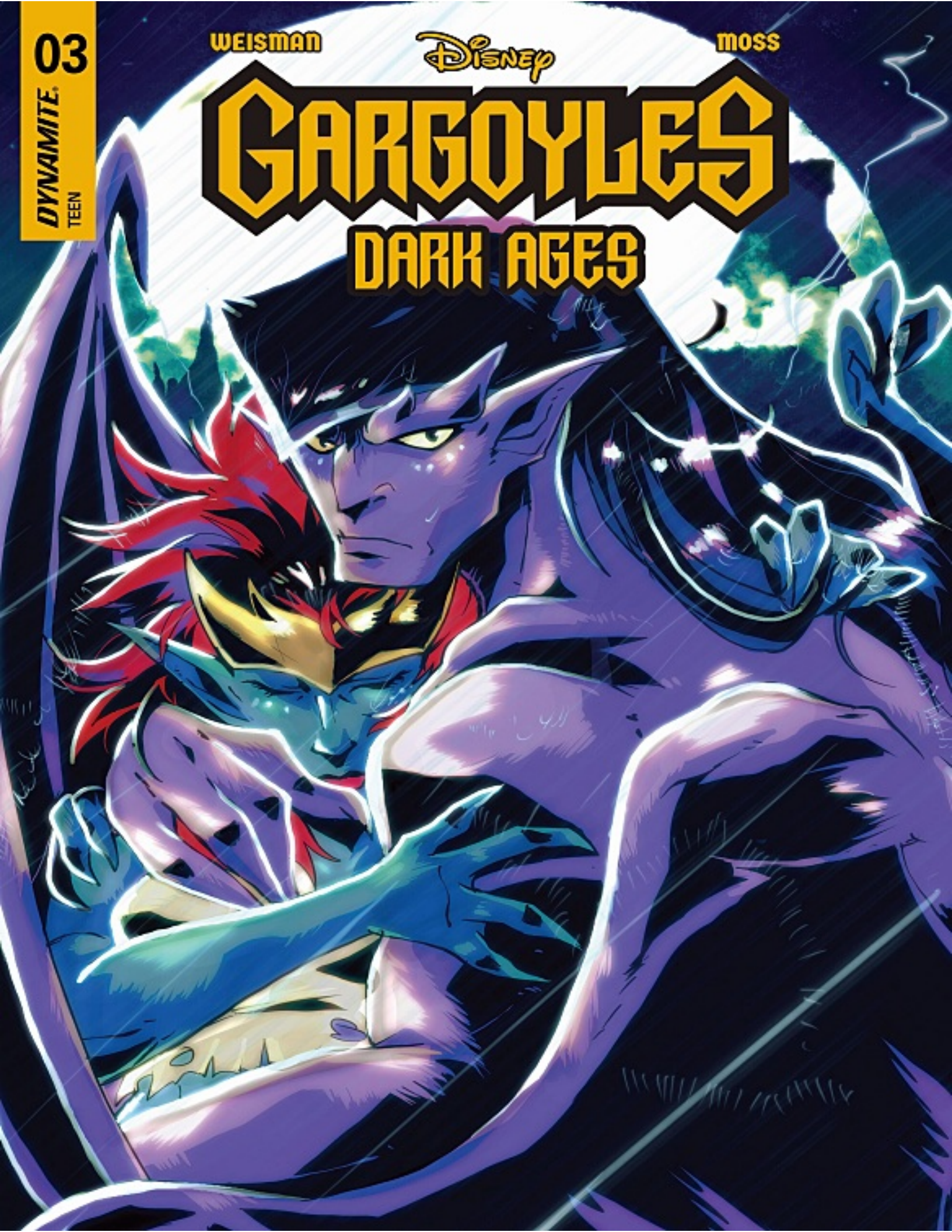
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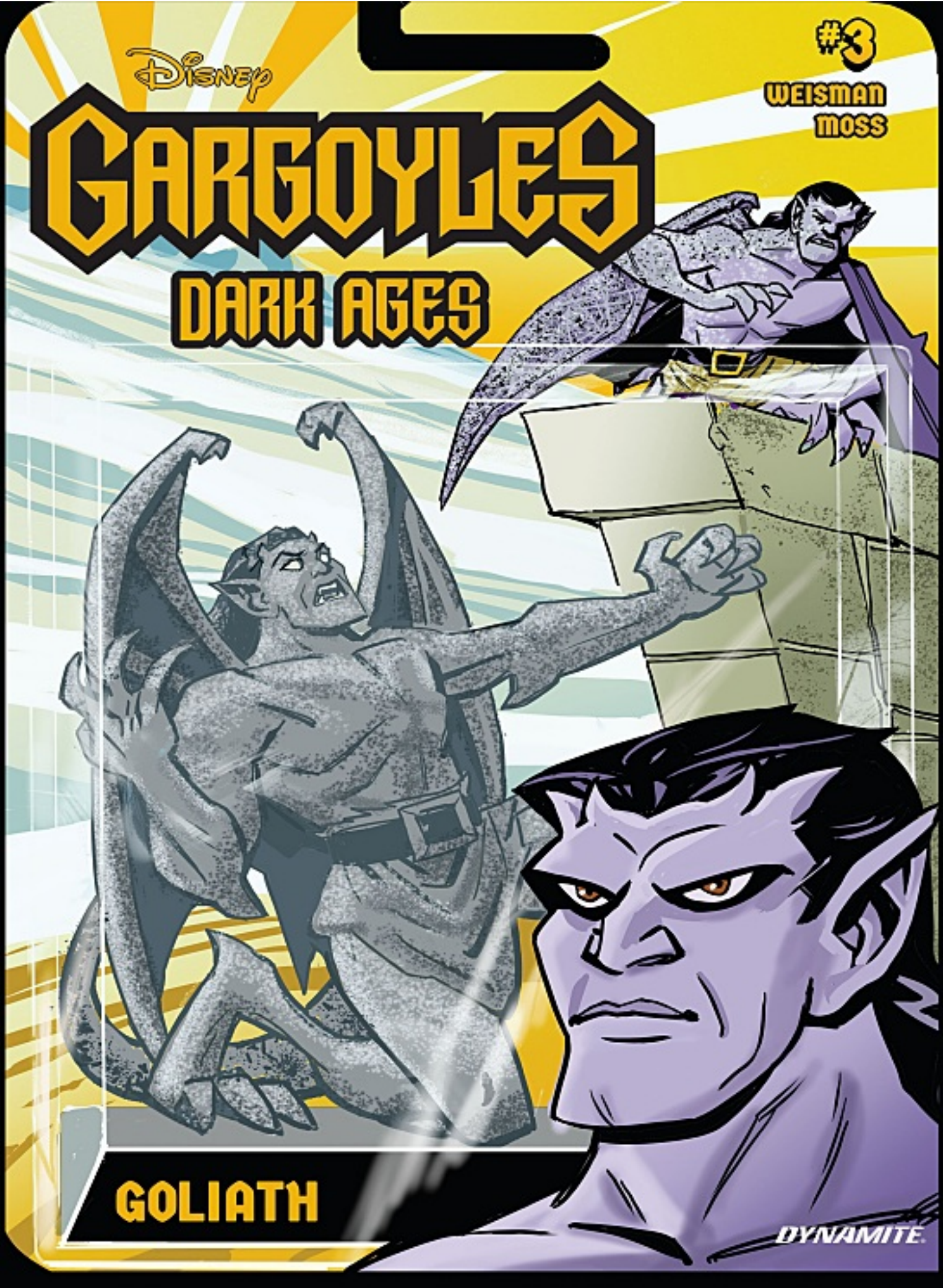
Disney
GARGOYLES
DARK AGES
#3
WEISMAN
MOSS
GOLIATH
DYNAMITE

ALL IS ONE WITH THE WIND.

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Fulminous Venite!

KRAKKACK!
WE WONDER, MONSTER, WHERE YOU OBTAINED THIS TREASURE...
KR-RACK
MOREOVER, WE WONDER WHY WE SHOULD LET YOU KEEP IT...
RRRRRRR!
PERHAPS WE SHALL HAVE THE GOLD MELTED DOWN...
...TO MAKE A RATTLE FOR OUR SON, PRINCE CONSTANTINE...
KING CULEN! THE LIGHTNING LIT THE STABLES AFLAME!!
WELL, DON'T PANIC, MENTETH. SEND SOLDIERS TO PUT IT OUT.

FULMINUS VENITE!!
KRA-KOOM
GET WATER! PUT OUT THE FIRES!!
FULMINUS VENITE!!
KRA-KA-CHUUM
KOF KOF KOF
KOF KOF

LET'S MOVE, LAD.
WAIT!
I WILL GO WITH YOU!
NAE, DAUGHTER, THAT YOU WILL NOT.
YOUR DISOBEDIENCE HAS COST THIS CLAN TOO MUCH ALREADY.
BESIDES, YOUR BROTHER HERE IS SUFFICIENTLY MOTIVATED.
HE AND I WILL SUFFICE.
BUT WHY NOT BRING ALL OUR FORCES TO BEAR?
AYE, OLD FRIEND. THAT DOES SEEM... PRUDENT.
HAVE FAITH, ALL OF YOU...
...I WILL KEEP MY OATH.

BOOM

One thousand years ago, *superstition* and the *sword* ruled. It was a time of *darkness*. It was a world of *fear*. It was...
Disney
GARGOYLES
DARK AGES
ALLIANCE
Chapter Three: The Oath
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Drew Moss
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Jeff Eckleberry
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Clayton Crain
Main Cover
Nathan Cosby
Packager/Editor

I WARNED YOU NOT TO TAKE MY DAUGHTER, HUMAN...
NO! *KOF KOF* STAY BACK, DEMON!
STAY BACK!!

THWACK
MY ANGEL...
MY LOVE!
I WILL FREE YOU...
I WILL FREE YOU!!
NO! THERE'S NO TIME!
PLEASE, PLEASE, SAVE YOURSELF!!
I WILL FREE YOU!

RRROCHHRRR

CULEN IS NO MORE.
WAIT, WHAT IS--
BUT HIS SON COMMITTED NONE OF HIS FATHER'S CRIMES...
TIS TRUE. THIS WEE BAIRN IS AN INNOCENT, INDEED...
...MAY THE SINS OF THE FATHER NEVER FALL UPON HIS HEAD.
AND THIS, MY LASS, BELONGS TO YOU, I RECKON.
YES. THANK YOU.
I'M SO SORRY, MY FATHER. I'LL NEVER DISOBEY YOU AGAIN!
HM. I'VE NO LOVE FOR CULEN'S MEN, BUT THAT'S A HORRIBLE WAY TO GO...
NOT A MAN WITHIN PERISHED BY THE FLAME.

The next night...
BUT, FATHER, I WANTED TO SEE THE CORONATION...
...AND AS HIGH KING, I, KENNETH--SECOND OF THAT NAME--DO SWEAR BY LIA FAIL, THE STONE OF DESTINY--
--TO PROTECT SCOTLAND AND SERVE HER PEOPLE ALL OF MY DAYS...
ALESAND, MY GIRL, THERE ARE SOME THINGS MORE IMPORTANT THAN A CORONATION...
...AND RESPECT MUST BE PAID.
...AND AS BUT AN INDICATION OF MY RESPECT AND GRATITUDE--
--I AWARD MY BROTHER THE TITLE OF PRINCE. PRINCE MALCOLM OF WYVERN!
...WITHOUT THE GARGOYLES, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO VICTORY. NO CORONATION.
NO SAFETY FOR OLD OR YOUNG...
IN THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION...
...I WILL RAISE CULEN'S YOUNG SON CONSTANTINE ALONGSIDE MY OWN SON, MAOL CHALVIM--
--AND ALONGSIDE KENNETH, SON OF MY LATE BROTHER, KING DUFF.

WE OWE THE GARGOYLES OUR LOYALTY. WE OWE THEM OUR VERY LIVES.
REMEMBER THAT.
REMEMBER THIS NIGHT...

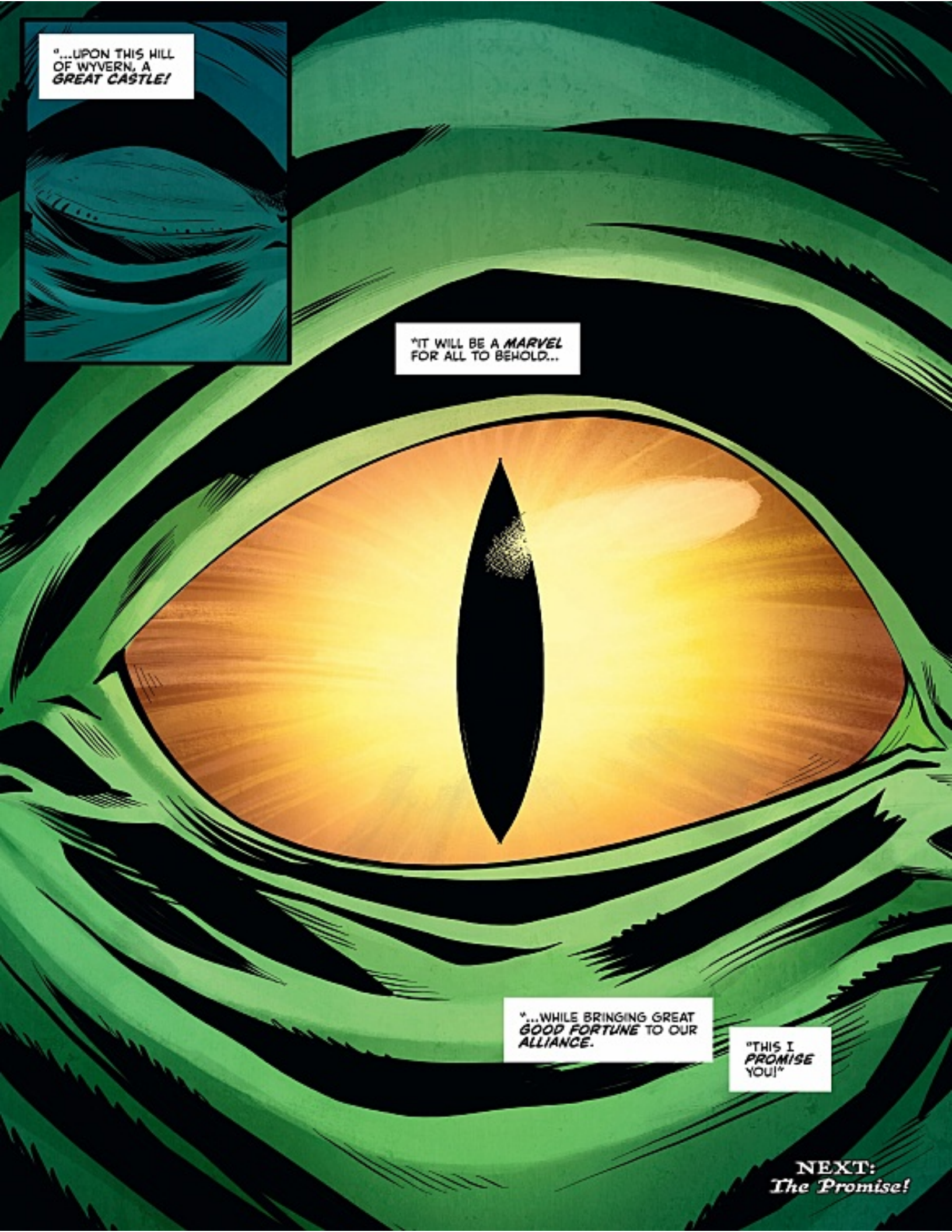
IT IS TIME TO SAY FAREWELL...
...IT IS TIME FOR THE WIND CEREMONY.
LET US BEGIN...
TONIGHT, THE FIRE CLAIMS WHAT OUR CLAN COULD NOT HOLD...
TONIGHT, OUR CLAN STANDS VIGIL UNTIL THE FIRE RUNS ITS COURSE...
FOR TONIGHT, THOSE WE LOVE AND MISS HAVE AT LAST RUN THEIRS...

ASHES TO ASHES OR DUST TO DUST...
...ALL IS ONE WITH THE WIND.
BE ONE WITH THE WIND, MY SISTERS, MY BROTHERS!
BE ONE WITH THE WIND, MY CLAN!
AND THUS, BE ONE WITH ALL WHOM THE WIND HAS FOREVER CARRIED AWAY FROM US!

Some nights later...
I HEAR YOU'RE PRINCE OF WYVERN NOW.
AYE, TRUE ENOUGH...
A WORD, MY DEAR?
WHAT DO YOU WANT, HUMAN?
MY BROTHER AND I AGREE THAT WYVERN IS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE.
TIME AND AGAIN, IT HAS PROVEN TO BE A GATEWAY TO SCOTLAND.
I WANTED TO EXPRESS MY SYMPATHIES. BEING CULEN'S CAPTIVE MUST HAVE BEEN HORRIBLE...
YOU MUST HAVE FELT SO POWERLESS...
THE THING IS, MY FRIEND...
...KING KENNETH AND I WANT TO BUILD A CASTLE HERE AT WYVERN.
HERE? YOU THINK TO DISPLACE MY CLAN?
YOU KNOW, I'VE PETITIONED THE PRINCE TO STAY AT WYVERN-- AS HIS PRIMARY ADVISOR.
WHAT HAS THIS TO DO WITH ME?

QUITE THE REVERSE! I WANT HUMANS AND GARGOYLES TO LIVE TOGETHER, SIDE BY SIDE...
...PROTECTING EACH OTHER DAY AND NIGHT. I BELIEVE IT WILL ONLY STRENGTHEN OUR ALLIANCE!
I WILL REQUIRE AN APPRENTICE. AND WITH WHAT I CAN TEACH YOU...
...YOU'LL NEVER FEEL POWERLESS AGAIN.
I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT. AND I BELIEVE MY MATE WOULD HAVE APPROVED.
I ACCEPT.

CAN YOU PICTURE IT--
UM... HM...
I KNOW YOU GARGOYLES HAVE NO NAMES, BUT I'M A HUMAN AND NEED TO CALL YOU SOMETHING!
AND WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST?
LET'S SEE... WELL...
YOU ACTED AS A MENTOR TO THE KING AND I THROUGHOUT THE BATTLE AND BEYOND...
...SO HOW ABOUT MENTOR?
"MENTOR?" 'TWILL SERVE.
SO, PICTURE IT, MENTOR...


"...UPON THIS HILL OF WYVERN, A GREAT CASTLE!
"IT WILL BE A MARVEL FOR ALL TO BEHOLD...
"...WHILE BRINGING GREAT GOOD FORTUNE TO OUR ALLIANCE.
"THIS I PROMISE YOU!"
NEXT: The Promise!

THE TALE OF THE THREE BROTHERS

PART THE THIRD

The Players performed a comedy for us on their third night upon Wyvern Hill. I'm not sure I understood it all, but I know I laughed and laughed. Still, I found I was almost more excited knowing what would come after: the young woman's nightly tale. Once again, she gathered us around the fire and began to speak…

The Story is told – though who can say if it be true – of Three Brothers, who were destined to save their land from tyranny – to save it, and lose it, and save it again.

In the Nine Hundred and Sixty-Second year of the Common Calendar, the brothers Duff and Kenneth gathered their forces. Word of the Brothers' rebellion reached King Indulf and Prince Culen almost immediately, yet they were surprisingly slow to react. After all, Indulf had Duff's stepmother and half-brother in his possession, along with the knowledge that Duff would not risk Katharine and Malcolm's safety, even for the Crown.

But then on the pre-arranged date, the Two Brothers marched on Edinburgh Castle and demanded Indulf's unconditional surrender. Indulf ordered his guards to bring Katharine and Malcolm to the throne room. Soon enough, Katharine was dragged before the King. But Malcolm, it seemed, could not be found. Indulf ordered Prince Culen to personally search every inch of the castle. While outside the walls, Duff and Kenneth – and their armies – settled down to wait…as planned.

Culen searched for hours. And Indulf could see that Katharine was anxious. Still, Malcolm could not be found.

Indulf drew his sword and threatened to cut Katharine in twain if she didn't reveal her son's whereabouts. She hesitated… but finally agreed, leading Indulf and Culen to the tallest tower in the Castle. Malcolm wasn't there, however, so a furious Indulf threatened to throw her off the ledge. She said nothing in response to his threat, simply pointing to the ground below. There in the moonlight, the hooded Malcolm could be seen riding away from the Castle, his signature wine-dark cape flapping in the breeze, toward the safety of Duff's camp.

King Indulf was practically apoplectic! But he still had Katharine and remained confident Duff would not dare risk attacking for her sake. But Katharine disagreed. Her tone became threatening. Like the Queen she had once been, she commanded Indulf to open the castle gates and let the Brothers' troops enter. Indulf laughed at her: *"Why in the world would I do that?"* *"Because,"* she told him as she climbed out of his reach onto the precarious edge of a battlement, *"if you don't open the gates, I will take away your last bit of leverage – and the only thing separating you and your son from the gallows."* Indulf started to laugh again, but the impulse caught in his throat. It all became instantly clear. If Katharine did as she seemed to intend, then his last bit of leverage would indeed be gone. Worse, his last bit of leverage would be martyred. Duff and Kenneth would lay siege to Edinburgh and, in time, would ultimately triumph. And then…

And then things might go *very* badly for a tyrant.

Indulf made a quick decision. If he and Culen were granted safe passage to Ireland, the King would immediately and "voluntarily" abdicate the throne to Duff. Culen protested, but Katharine agreed to his terms. Still, she remained on the battlement's edge until the gates were thrown open and Duff and Kenneth were at her side. *"Hurry,"* she shouted, rushing with her stepsons to the Castle's small cemetery.

Robbie was already there, still wearing Malcolm's wine-dark cape and hood, digging up a fresh grave – one that had a strange wooden tube protruding mere inches out of the soft earth. Some of Duff's men were helping Robert, but Duff and Kenneth pushed the soldiers aside and personally began to dig. Katharine, herself, fell to her knees, pulling dirt away with her hands until a waiting woman could be brought to comfort her. A coffin was unearthed. Robbie had a crow-bar ready, and snapped off the lid with the kind of bull-like strength he would one day be famous for. Malcolm lay still in the grave. Suddenly he gasped for air. He was alive. He had been *buried* alive – with a slim wooden tube to provide air. But he had spent hours below ground. And the tube had barely been sufficient. Had the stand-off with Indulf lasted much longer, he might well have succumbed.

But now the brave boy was rocked back and forth in his mother's arms. He smiled at his good friend Robbie. *"Best prank yet,"* Malcolm said. Robbie laughed and agreed.

And then Malcolm was introduced to his two older brothers for the very first time. He had worshipped Duff and Kenneth from afar his entire life. But it was they who were impressed. Duff, soon to be *King Duff*, lifted Malcolm to his feet. *"Prince Malcolm,"* he said, *"I am* honored *to be your brother."*

The young woman ceased her tale then. *"But that's not the end,"* I cried. *"No,"* she agreed, *"Few things ever just end."* It was my father, who of course already new the story from personal experience, who (with a wink and a grin) said, *"Then whatever happened next?"*

The young woman wagged a finger at his cheek and said, *"That is a story for another night..."*

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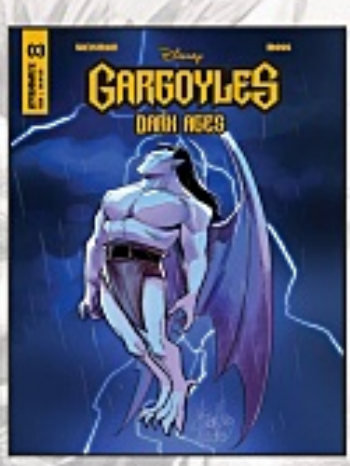
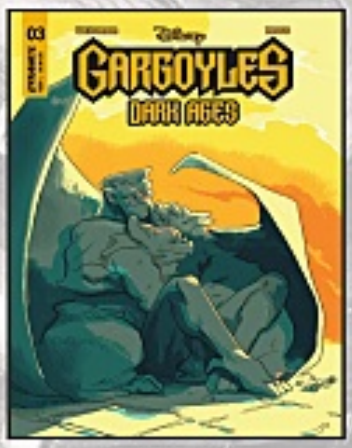
COVER A
Art by
CLAYTON CRAIN

COVER B
Art by
ALAN QUAH



COVER C
Art by
MIRKA ANDOLFO

COVER D
Art by
KENYA DANINO



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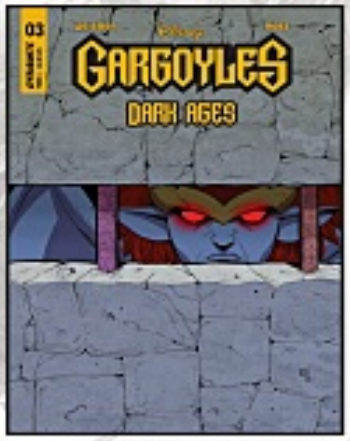
JEFF PARKER



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COVER GALLERY

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COVER L
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B&W Art by
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COVER M
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COVER N
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